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Physical Activity Touted as Arthritis Pain Reliever

South Central District Health, in conjunction with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is promoting National Arthritis Month in May. A campaign that encourages people with arthritis to participate in some sort of physical activity to help manage their pain is called "Physical Activity -- The Arthritis Pain Reliever."

Research shows that becoming more physically active can actually help with arthritis pain. For many years, it was believed that physical activity would do more harm than good for people with arthritis. It was believed that physical activity could damage joints, but recent studies show the opposite. Studies show that moderate physical activity helps people with arthritis. Regular moderate physical activity can help people with arthritis feel less pain, move more easily and do more activities, and feel more energetic and positive. It also helps keep muscles, bones, and joints healthy. Low impact activities such as walking, swimming, and biking are the best exercise.

If you have arthritis, don't sit still for the pain. Studies show that 30 minutes of physical activity three or more days a week can bring some relief. You can do your 30 minutes in 10- or 15-minute intervals. Swim for 15 minutes in the morning and walk for 15 minutes after dinner. Go for a 20-minute bike ride and later take a 10-minute walk. Ask a friend or family member to join you.

Two physical activity programs are available in Twin Falls specifically for people who have arthritis. The Arthritis Foundation's Aquatics course is offered five days a week at the City Pool for a small fee. The Arthritis Foundation's People with Arthritis Can Exercise (PACE) class is offered free of charge three days a week at the Twin Falls Senior Center, 530 Shoshone Street West. Information about the local classes is available by calling 734-5900, ext. 284, or 736-3933.

If you would like a free arthritis information packet, call the Idaho Careline at 1-800-926-2588 or simply dial 2-1-1.